

Greenwich Time (CT)

July 12, 1999

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A few years ago, during the summer of 1999 to be exact, Adam Yankowich and Nick Ogden were looking to make some extra money. So, the two Greenwich teens -- Nick was 15 at the time and Adam, 17 -- looked around, considered their options and decided to create a local boat cleaning business. They named the fledgling outfit Greenwich Boat Cleaners and they specialized in exterior and interior maintenance of both sail and motor boats.

"It started off as a favor, cleaning boats for some family friends," says Ogden.

But soon the boys realized they had stumbled on to something quite profitable -- and a job that was very much in demand, thanks to Greenwich's large boating community. By the following summer, the pair had to enlist two more of their friends, McComb Dunwoody and Sam Bosch, to join their growing business and help them meet rising demand.

This year, that same staff of four is at it again, offering what Yankowich calls their special brand of "personalized service."

Yankowich, now 21, is a sophomore at Lafayette College. Ogden is 20 and headed into his freshman year at Vanderbilt University. Bosch, 19, is a junior at Sacred Heart University, and McComb is 18 and a Sr. at Kent boarding school. All are Greenwich residents and good friends, and have grown up around boats -- which has certainly helped with their business.

Their enterprise has grown and together they service boaters throughout Greenwich, Stamford, and Port Chester, N.Y., and this summer they are expanding their territory to include Rowayton, and Rye, N.Y.

Self-promotion has been a big part of their success. The four advertise with flyers, by word of mouth, and by actively going around to boaters and introducing their services. You can also spot big magnets on each of their cars that display their Web site address, www.greenwichboatcleaners.com.

But if you hire them, don't expect them to scrape any barnacles. The four clean only above the water

line, no hull; or as Nick explains it "no scuba stuff." Their tools, Dunwoody adds, are "soap, wax and a sponge."

Currently, the four service 28 clients, with all different types of boats. The time that they spend cleaning varies by boat size. But, they usually spend several hours cleaning each boat, and work from 6 to 8 hours a day. They also work seven days a week and offer different services including a standard wash, a detailing and waxing.

Their success, they say, depends upon repeat business and weekly customers, such as businessmen who do not have the extra time to clean their own boats thoroughly. And the guys believe that there are two types of boaters: "the avid ones, who are out there cleaning their boats with a toothbrush, and the others who are social boaters who'd rather have us do the dirty work," says Yankowich.

Doing that dirty work does pay off though, and not just with cash. Bosch, a business major, says that he hopes that by working with Greenwich Boat Cleaners it will help him "gain the skills to be a good entrepreneur one day." Dunwoody agrees with his friend and adds that working for Greenwich Boat Cleaners offers a "good time, good experience."

And that is really what their business is all about.

"We all have fun," says Yankowich. "We get to spend 6 hours a day on the water -- with four best friends."

(For more information on Greenwich Boat Cleaners visit their Web site, or call 203-561-9631.)

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Record Number: 10F0F01058930FB8